

Amendments to the Specification:

Page 1, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 6 and ending at line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

As to documents such as contracts which are made among entities such as government offices and privately-owned corporations, exchanging of electronic documents which are prepared by using information processing devices such as computers has been increased in lieu of exchanging paper documents. On exchanging of electronic documents, electronic signatures (digital signatures) have been used for authentication of personal identification or protection against tampering by unauthorized persons. The technology of the digital signature per se is described in, for example, "Secure Electronic Commerce: Building the Infrastructure for Digital sSignatures and eEncryption-technology", par. 4.3 "digital signature", by W. Ford et al., Piason EducationPrentice Hall, (1997).